Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL MBABANE 1657

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8603 INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE AMEMBASSY LONDON AMEMBASSY MASERU

E.O. 11652: GDS TAGS: TGEN, WZ

SUBJ: SEISMIC STATION IN SWAZILAND

REF: MBABANE 1119 (NOTAL)

1. DEPARTING BHC LE TOCQ INFORMED CHARGE SEPTEMBER 30 THAT THE QUESTION OF THE SEISMIC STATION FOR SWAZILAND HAD BEEN DISCUSSED DURING HIS FAREWELL CALL ON KING SOBHUZA ON SEPTEMBER 29. THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO WAS ALSO PRESENT FOR THIS INTERVIEW, HAD RAISED THE SUBJECT. THE PRIME MINISTER TOLD THE KING THAT THE MATTER HAD BEEN DISCUSSED BY THE CABINET WHICH HAD TWO PROBLEMS:

A. THE UK LEASE HAD BEEN SHIFTED FROM THE UK ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENSE WITHOUT GOS CONCURRENCE. THIS MIGHT GIVE SOME PEOPLE THE IMPRESSION THAT SWAZILAND WAS STILL A BRITISH PROTECTORATE.

B. THERE WAS NO PROVISION IN THE AGREEMENT FOR TRAINING SWAZI COUNTERPARTSTO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONFIDENTIAL

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STATION AT SOME FUTURE DATE.

- 2. LE TOCQ EXPLAINED THAT HIS PURPOSE IN ORIGINALLY RAISING THIS QUESTION WAS PRECISELY TO OBTAIN GOS CONCURRENCE ON THE TRANSFER OF THE LEASE FROM THE ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY TO DEFENSE. IF THIS CAUSED PROBLEMS FOR GOS HE BELIEVED THE NEW LEASE COULD BE WITH THE BHC IN SWAZILAND OR SIMPLY THE "SECRETARY OF STATE" WITHOUT MENTIONING DEFENSE. RE COUNTERPART TRAINING, LE TOCQ TOLD THE KING HE UNDERSTOOD MANY SUCH SEISMIC STATIONS ARE IN FACT OPERATED BY HOST GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL SO HE DID NOT THINK THIS WOULD BE A PROBLEM.
- 3. AFTER ASKING SEVERAL QUESTIONS, THE KING GAVE HIS APPROVAL FOR THE NEGOTIATION OF A NEW LEASE AND SAID THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE BHC SHOULD WORK OUT THE DETAILS. SINCE LE TOCQ IS DEPARTING SWAZILAND ON REASSIGNMENT OCTOBER 1, FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ON THIS SUBJECT WILL BE POSTPONED FOR AT LEAST THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS.
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